

"B" was to approach the peninsula from the east and was to land late on D-Day and early on D plus one on landing zones astride the STE. MERE EGLISE - BLOS-VILLE Road (3694). In a last-minute change of plan General RIDGEMAN parachuted with Force "A".

Aerial resupply missions were scheduled automatically for the morning of D plus one and on call thereafter if needed. The automatic mission was the only parachute mission ultimately flown but a small amount of equipment and supplies were received later by glider.

All airborne elements of the Division had closed and were sealed in special camps at the take-off fields by 24 hours before the scheduled take-off time. Parachute elements were located at seven airfields in the GRAVEHAM - COTTESMORE - LINGAR area of the British Midlands, and glider elements were at seven airfields in the LDERMASTON - RAMSBURY - MERRYFIELD area. (See Annex No. 3 A)

All men were briefed thoroughly on their missions, a recheck was made of all equipment and personnel, and planes and gliders were loaded with equipment. The Allied D-Day was postponed 24 hours because of weather conditions, and the first planes of Force "A" took off at 052315 June 1944.

The main flight was preceded by the three regimental pathfinder teams which dropped one-half hour prior to the first group. The pathfinders sustained many casualties and had difficulty in using lights, but they accomplished their mission and set up beacons to guide the incoming planes to the three designated drop zones.

The flight over the English Channel was in good formation and without incident, but between the west coast and the drop zones a heavy fog bank tended to break up the formation of the planes. Flak and some enemy night fighters activity caused some of the troop carrier planes to take up evasive action, and by the time the drop zones were reached many planes were scattered, and were flying at excessive speeds and at altitudes higher than those ideal for jumping.

The 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment landed generally in the vicinity of its drop zone. The 507th Parachute Infantry was scattered, one element dropping in the vicinity of MONTBOURG, another south of CARSTAN and the remainder astride the MERDERET River east of the drop zone. The 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment was likewise scattered widely, the bulk of its parachutists dropping east of the Drop Zone and some personnel landing as far away as nine kilometers south of CHERBOURG.

The 52 gliders containing batteries of the 80th Airborne Antiaircraft Battalion and detachments and forward parties of artillery, signal and Division Headquarters groups followed the main body of paratroopers and began landing at 0404 hours. The gliders also encountered fog and flak. They too were scattered, and many of them were damaged upon crashing into the small fields and high hedges.

Enemy reaction to the landing of the 82d Airborne Division in the NORMANDY area was prompt and severe, but from the time the first man landed until 77 days later, when the Division was finally relieved, every mission was accomplished and no ground gained was ever relinquished.

A day-by-day account of the Division's activities follows:

D-DAY, 6 JUNE 1944 (See Annexes 5 and 6)

The first element of the main body of the Division jumped at 0151 hours, having been preceded 30 minutes by the Pathfinder teams. By 0312 hours all paratroopers had landed, and at 0404 hours the first of 52 gliders in the initial glider serial crash landed. Both parachutists and gliders were scattered.

Small groups and some units attacked to secure the Division zone. Groups

